

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (previously presented): A method for digital imaging of a printing form through application of energy, the printing form having a burn-off area detachably fixed by supporting points in the burn-off area, the supporting points being left in place on the printing form through non-imaging of image spots, the method comprising the steps of:

leaving in place at least one of the supporting points in at least one reference point if a number of image spots to be imaged in a surrounding area of the reference point exceeds a limit value and a boundary area in the surrounding area around the reference point contains only image spots to be imaged; and

detaching burn-off from the burn-off area from the printing form in a cleaning step.

Claim 2 (original): The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the number of image spots to be imaged in a surrounding area of a reference point is determined in an analysis of the image data represented in digital form as a bit field.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising a calibration step prior to the leaving in place step wherein at least one of a geometric shape and extent of the surrounding area, ~~and/or~~ the limit value, ~~and/or~~ the geometric shape and extent of the boundary area, ~~and/or~~ and the distance from a first reference point to a second reference point of the at least one reference point is determined.

Claim 4 (original): The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the at least one reference point includes a plurality of reference points distributed in a uniform grid over a printing area of the printing form.

Claim 5 (original): The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the distance from a first reference point to a second reference point of the at least one reference point matches an extent of the boundary area.

Claim 6 (original): A system for digital imaging of printing forms in a method as recited in claim 1, the system comprising:

an energy source,

a cleaning unit,

a control unit, and

an image processing unit with a computing unit,

wherein in the computing unit of the image processing unit a program is executable, the program having at least one executable step determining whether the limit value has been exceeded at a number of positions in a bit field representing the image data in digital form, the positions corresponding to the reference points.

Claim 7 (original): The system as recited in claim 6 wherein the image processing unit includes a raster image processor and a data buffer for the image data represented in digital form as a bit field.

Claim 8 (original): The system as recited in claim 6 wherein the program has at least one executable step for modifying the bit field in at least one area at the positions at which the limit value is exceeded.

Claim 9 (original): A printing unit comprising a system for imaging as recited in claim 6.

Claim 10 (original): A printing press comprising a printing unit as recited in claim 9.

Claim 11 (new): A method for digital imaging of a printing form through application of energy, the printing form having a burn-off area detachably fixed by supporting points in the burn-off area, the supporting points being left in place on the printing form through non-imaging of image

spots, the method comprising the steps of:

examining a plurality of image spots in a surrounding area of at least one reference point and comparing the number of image spots to be imaged with a limiting value;

leaving in place at least one of the supporting points in at least one reference point if the number of image spots to be imaged in the surrounding area of the reference point exceeds the limit value and a boundary area in the surrounding area around the reference point contains only image spots to be imaged; and

detaching burn-off from the burn-off area from the printing form in a cleaning step.

Claim 12 (new): A method for digital imaging of a printing form through application of energy, the printing form having a burn-off area detachably fixed by supporting points in the burn-off area, the supporting points being left in place on the printing form through non-imaging of image spots, the method comprising the steps of:

leaving in place at least one of the supporting points in at least one reference point if a number of image spots to be imaged in a surrounding area of the at least one reference point exceeds a limit value and a boundary area in the surrounding area around the reference point contains only image spots to be imaged and removing at least one of the supporting points in the at least one reference point if the number of image spots to be imaged in the surrounding area of the reference point does not exceed the limit value or if the boundary area in the surrounding area around the reference point does not contain only image spots to be imaged; and

detaching burn-off from the burn-off area from the printing form in a cleaning step.